

THE
NATIONAL PREACHER.

Go... Teach all Nations.... Mat. xxviii, 19.

No. 6.

NEW-YORK, NOVEMBER 1826.

VOL. I.

SERMONS VI. & VII.

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**THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST, THE GROUND OF THE
BELIEVER'S TRIUMPH.**

ROMANS VIII. 34.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us.

It is the genius of Christianity, that it gives a new and noble direction to the intellectual powers, while it exerts a controlling and sanctifying influence on the heart and life. It does not, indeed, change the original structure of the mind, but it quickens and elevates the faculties, by employing them upon objects of the most pure and exalted character. I know not whether the apostle Paul, independently of divine inspiration, was more indebted to the original fertility and grandeur of his intellect, or to the all-inspiring influence of the subjects he discusses, for the majesty which pervades the chapter from which my text is taken: but certain it is, that inspiration itself can hardly furnish a parallel to the sublimity with which the argument is here conducted. It is the mighty march of a mind acting in all the dignity of independent greatness, and fired and elevated by a principle no less commanding

than the love of Jesus. The point which the apostle is here immediately labouring to establish, is the superiority of the Gospel to the Mosaic dispensation, in the motives which it furnishes to religious purity and obedience: and if you attend to the process by which he arrives at his triumphant conclusion, you will perceive that, at each successive step, his mind kindles with fresh rapture, and seems to be feasting upon new-discovered glories. After glancing at some of the most prominent peculiarities of the Gospel, all of which strikingly illustrate the happy condition of the Christian, he closes this part of his discourse with a magnificent climax, which mingles the power of a comprehensive genius, the glow of an exquisite sensibility, the triumph of an elevated faith, and the majesty of divine inspiration;—*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

It is the object of the following discourses, TO CONSIDER THE SEVERAL PARTS OF THE MEDIATORIAL WORK OF CHRIST, AS EXHIBITED IN THE TEXT; AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN SECURING THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE CHRISTIAN.

I. We will follow the order suggested by the apostle, and endeavour, first, to exhibit A BRIEF VIEW OF THE MEDIATION OF THE SON OF GOD.

1. And here the first thing that presents itself, is the CHARACTER of the personage by whom the mediatorial office is sustained: It is Christ that died. On this point, our inquiry shall simply be, What saith the Scripture?

To collect all that is said of this wonderful personage, would be to

recite a large portion of the prophetical and historical parts of Revelation. We can only glance at a few prominent passages. The prophet Isaiah describes the character of Christ by these remarkable appellations: *And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.* In the forty-fifth psalm, the same exalted person, (as we are informed by the apostle Paul,) is addressed by the Psalmist in these words: *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.* Paul has declared him to be *God over all blessed for ever*; and again, the same apostle has said, that *by him all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him, and for Him.* Says the apostle John, who was permitted to behold the unveiled glories of God; *Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.* And the same apostle has elsewhere said, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* And finally, in the revelation by St. John, Jesus Christ says of himself, *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* And elsewhere, *I am the First, and the Last; I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.* I do not intend to discuss any of these scriptural declarations, but to allude to them in a subsequent part of this discourse. But the passages of which those now recited are a specimen, only give a partial view of the character of Christ. It is the very same person who is characterized by the following description: *He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; He is despised and rejected of men. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living; and His grave was appointed with the wicked; but with the rich man was his tomb, though he had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth.*

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The former part of this wonderful character was displayed during the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, in all the intercourse which He held with his people as the Angel of the covenant; but the latter part was never disclosed, till He assumed our nature and came to dwell upon the earth. But amidst all his humiliation, the glory which He had with the Father *before the world was*, was only partially obscured. It was the Sun shining through an eclipse. An angel from heaven foretold his birth; and a choir of angels announced to the world his advent. At his command, the sightless eyeball received the power of vision, and the tongue of the dumb man was loosed; the withered limbs of the paralytic resumed their office; the victim of leprosy escaped from his loathsomeness, and walked abroad in all the bloom and vigor of health: the iron-bound slumbers of the dead were broken up; the raging of the winds and the waves was composed; and even while He hung upon the cross, nature testified to his Divinity by a mighty convulsion. It is hardly necessary to say, at the close of this brief recital, that his character stands alone in the annals of the universe. Search through the heavens and the earth, and you will find nothing with which it admits of comparison.

2. Next to the character of Christ, our text leads us to notice his **DEATH.** It is Christ that **died.**

I do not deny that purposes were answered in the Divine administration, by the death of Christ, which have never yet been revealed to us; purposes, it may be, even more magnificent than those which relate to our own redemption. There may be other worlds than ours within the dominions of Jehovah, where a spirit of rebellion has been manifested, and the benefits of Christ's death enjoyed. And there may be other worlds still, where the inhabitants have never violated their allegiance to their Almighty Sovereign, in which the revelation of this wonderful fact may serve as a mirror to reflect the brightest of the divine glories. But it is not with other parts of the system that we are so immediately concerned. The death of Christ, for aught we know, may exert an influence of some kind or other, wherever there are intelligent beings; but in respect to ourselves, and the world to which we belong, there is no room for doubt.

Not only the general fact that the death of Christ procures our salvation

tion, but something of the *manner* in which it operates to the accomplishment of this end, is made the subject of distinct revelation. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law*, says the apostle, *being made a curse for us*. Not that the substitution was in every respect literal and exact: that would have been inconsistent with the perfectly holy character of the Son of God: but the sufferings of Christ had such a relation to the divine law, as completely to answer the purposes of God in the punishment of sin, and thus to constitute a proper ground of deliverance from the curse. In the cross of Christ, therefore, the claims of Divine justice are so answered,—the majesty of the Divine law is so maintained,—that God can now be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth. Accordingly, it is agreeable to the uniform tenor of Scripture, that we are redeemed by the *blood of Christ*; and that faith in Him as an atoning sacrifice, is one of the grand conditions of salvation.

Here, brethren, if I mistake not, is the hinge, on which the whole system of Christianity turns. It is the death of Christ, as a propitiation for the sins of the world, which gives the gospel its chief value, as a religion for sinners. Tell me not that He died merely to set an example of pious suffering, or to substantiate his claim as an ambassador of God. I do not deny that these were subordinate ends of his death; but compared with the grand object for which He suffered, they are only as the feeble glimmering of the glow-worm, to the condensed brightness of the noon-day sun. By limiting the influence of Christ's death to his example, you not only set all our immortal hopes afloat, and blot out the glory of the Gospel, but you reflect upon the character of God, by imputing to him the weakness of incurring an amazing expense, without any sufficient end. Believe it, who will, that He who was the *Brightness of the Father's glory*, and who *made all things by the word of his power*, condescended to assume our nature, and die upon the cross, merely to exhibit to the world the faith and constancy of a martyr!

3. But you will ask, if Christ died to make satisfaction for the sins of men, what evidence is there that his atonement has been accepted of God? I answer, thirdly, there is complete evidence in the fact of his **RESURRECTION**. The apostle adds, *Yea, rather, that is risen again.*

The death of Christ, as we have seen, was the ransom which was paid for our redemption; but it is his resurrection alone, which renders

our faith in his blood a rational act. If He had never come back from the grave, we might have been attracted by the lustre of his example, and had our sympathies awakened by the story of his death, but it would have been delusion to have expected redemption by his blood. But when He came in triumph from the tomb, the scandal and ignominy of the cross were wiped away ; and in the power and glory of His resurrection, we may consider God as setting his seal to the efficacy of his atonement. When Jesus *bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*, the sentence of condemnation was virtually reversed ; but it was not till he had burst the bands of death, and appeared in the character of a Conqueror, that the believer's justification was fully manifest. *For*, as the apostle argues, *'if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life'* ;—that is, *by his resurrection to life and glory*.

But our view of this grand triumph over the grave will be too limited, unless we consider it as the pledge of our own resurrection. Jesus rose as the Representative of his people ; and the connection is not more certain between the vine and the branches, or the head and the members, than between His resurrection and that of all his followers. You perceive, then, on what a firm foundation, this most consoling doctrine of our religion rests. You are not left to deduce it from the subtleties of metaphysics, or to collect it from vague and scattered intimations in the word of God : nay, you have something more than even a positive promise ; for it is identified with the most illustrious fact in the history of Christianity. Never were the jeers of infidelity more out of place, than when they are directed against this life-giving doctrine ; for, to say nothing of its inherent consolations, it is sustained by evidence, which it is beyond the power of wit or reason to gainsay.

4. The next thing which the apostle notices in reference to the mediatorial work of Christ, is his EXALTATION : *Who is even at the right hand of God*.

The phrase, *at the right hand of God*, is expressive of the highest dignity and authority. In taking possession of the mediatorial throne, Christ has acquired a dominion different from that which he held, as the Sovereign and original Proprietor of all things. It is a dominion

founded on the covenant of redemption, and to continue till the final consummation. It extends to all beings and all events. It is His Providence that operates in the natural world with an unwearied and undecaying energy. His hand guides the revolutions of the planets, and the destinies of empires. He setteth up one, and putteth down another, and none can resist his power, or question his right. The same hand is concerned in directing the most insignificant of human affairs; in controlling even the irrational and inanimate creation. The insect that glitters in the sun-beam, or the atom that floats upon the breeze, is as truly the object of his superintendence, as the convulsion of a kingdom, or the extinction of a world. The principalities and powers of Heaven too, the shining ranks of angels, the glorious retinue of seraphim, the innumerable company of the redeemed, are all subject to his authority. The church on earth also looks up to Him as her Lawgiver and her Head; and He dispenses to her, through the ordinances which He has established, a Divine influence; and He has pledged the stability of his throne for her security and triumph. Nor do the powers of darkness, with all their malice and rage, escape from his dominion. Amidst all the weeping and wailing of that world, not a pang of agony is felt, not a shriek of horror is uttered, not a vial of wrath is poured out, but it is in some way or other subject to the mediatorial direction of the Son of God.

But the occasion which shall witness to the most triumphant and awful display of his authority, will be the general Judgment. Before He delivers up the kingdom to the Father, all nations shall be assembled before Him, and He shall separate the good from the bad, *as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.* You may send forth your imagination to collect every image of tenderness and majesty, of burning vengeance and melting compassion, of unutterable joy and overwhelming woe, and you will only have gathered materials for a faint description of this tremendous scene. But in this scene Jesus Christ is to preside. It is from His lips that the sentence is to proceed, agreeably to which, you and I shall pass off to the right hand or the left, according as it is a sentence of acquittal, or a sentence of condemnation.

5. It is in consequence of the exaltation of Christ, and may be considered as one grand purpose of his exaltation, that **HE INTERCEDES FOR HIS PEOPLE.** The apostle adds, *Who also maketh intercession for us.*

This part of Christ's mediation has particular reference to the sins of his own people ; for, notwithstanding the pardoning mercy of God, and the renewing influences of the Spirit, have been extended to them, they are still, in a greater or less degree, the victims of corruption. But He who has promised that they shall be kept by his mighty power through faith unto salvation, has ordained the intercession of Jesus as a means by which this important end is to be secured. In what manner this intercession is carried on, we are not particularly informed ; but it seems probable, from the nature of the case, as well as from some intimations in scripture, that it is by presenting his human nature, as an unceasing symbol of His labours and sufferings for the church. He has no need, brethren, in pleading our cause, to make use of many words : action is the most powerful eloquence. The soldier who has bled in his country's battles, has only to bare his bosom, and show you his wounds, and he makes a much stronger appeal to your heart, than he could by the longest and most moving addresses. So our great Intercessor has only to display the prints of the nails in his hands, and of the spear that pierced his body, and how can He fail to be an all-prevalent Advocate ? It is through this part of His mediatorial office that Christians are preserved from final apostacy, obtain the forgiveness of sins committed after their renovation, and have a reception secured into the heavenly mansions ;—*seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

How delightful a view of the character of Christ is presented by the fact, that in that world of joy whither He has gone, and amidst all the glories of his exaltation, He never for one moment withdraws his gracious regards from those worms of the dust, for whom he laid down his life ; that amidst all their waywardness and wanderings, He should manifest his unchangeable love by a perpetual and all-powerful intercession. With what gratitude and praise to the Redeemer should we reflect, that every measure of grace sent down to us from the Father of mercies, every visit we receive from the Holy Comforter, every well-grounded hope of future and eternal bliss, is in consequence of his ascension into heaven, *now to appear in the presence of God for us.* Blessed Jesus ! we will praise thee : *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive ; thou hast received gifts for men ; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them !*

As a relation to ushers is, and is, his as such does not give us a claim to do us wrong, but his son, being his heir, does. You grieve him, and he is the steward of his goods, but he is not his son.

SERMON VII.

ROMANS VIII. 34.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us.

II. HAVING followed the apostle through the several parts of Christ's mediatorial work, we now proceed to consider **THEIR INFLUENCE IN SECURING THE BELIEVER'S ACQUITTAL AND TRIUMPH.** *Who is he that condemneth?*

1. The believer hath nothing to fear from EXTERNAL AFFLICTIONS.

I do not mean that he may expect an exemption from them; for so long as he continues in the world, he must be a sharer in its trials and sorrows. Nay, it may be that his very religion, full of consolation and hope as it is, may be the means of nerving against him the arm of power, and scattering around him the fire-brands of persecution. But do you know that the situation of the Christian, in the very darkest scenes of adversity, is an enviable situation? Do you know that the arms of everlasting love are beneath that Christian's soul, and that the power of Divine grace is pledged for his consolation and deliverance? That gracious Redeemer, whose blood flowed for his salvation, and who has manifested towards him love stronger than death, hears every groan, observes every tear, and pours into his heart streams of living consolation. Moreover, He has promised that all things shall work together for the Christian's good: not even those afflictions, which lacerate the heart with agony, are excepted: they are included in that gracious covenant, which secures to him all the benefits of redemption. Oh, what affliction may not be accounted light, when it is regarded as an expression of the love of Christ? Is it not an enviable portion to be called to weeping, if our tears may return in a harvest of glory but only furnish to crown all the devout soul with a beauteous and

Mourning Christian, lift up your head and rejoice. There is a light faintly beaming through that cloud which overshadows you, which will

ere long break forth in all the fulness and splendour of noon-day. At no distant period, you will know that every throb of anguish which you feel, had in it the elements of the most pure and enduring joy. Fear not to go down to the very darkest spot in the vale of adversity. As sure as Jesus is faithful to his promises, He will, in due time, redeem you out of all your trouble : for what *shall separate you from the love of Christ?*

2. The mediation of Christ ensures to the believer a triumph over INDWELLING CORRUPTION, and the SUGGESTIONS OF THE ADVERSARY.

There is a conflict, known only to the Christian, which calls for unceasing watchfulness, and constitutes the source of his severest trials ; insomuch that it once led an apostle to exclaim, *O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* It results from the partial and occasional prevalence of sin in a soul, which has acquired a prevailing relish for holiness. This enemy of God and man, now appearing in the form of worldly-mindedness, and now in the grosser garb of sensual affection, the Christian cannot find it in his heart deliberately to tolerate ; but where is the Christian who will not testify, that as often as he has succeeded in gaining a victory over this internal foe, so often it has returned upon him, and demanded all the vigor of fresh opposition ? Do you sometimes yield to the desponding thought, that this war within will ultimately terminate in favour of your enemy ? Never fear that, Christian. Before such an event can take place, the pillars of the mediatorial kingdom must fall, the intercession of Jesus must prove ineffectual, and the grand purposes of his exaltation be defeated. Do you sometimes tremble, lest the insidious attacks of the adversary should succeed, and in spite of all your vigilance, and all your activity, you should finally fall a victim to his wiles ? Tremble you may for your own weakness ; but it is unworthy of a soul that has been washed in redeeming blood, and has the gracious assistance of the Spirit made sure to him, to shudder at the approach of *any* enemy. That exalted Redeemer who has gone into the heavens, watches every plot, and every movement of the adversary against you ; and He has set bounds to his career of temptation which he can never pass. Great and formidable as this enemy is, there is One greater than he ; One who has acquired a glorious triumph over the powers of darkness, which their combined energies can never reverse ; One who has taken you into his own family, and identified your interest with the interests

of his kingdom. Were it possible for the adversary to pluck you out of the Redeemer's hands, he would gain a victory which would kindle a smile of malignant exultation on the countenance of every fiend in hell; for he would have succeeded in overturning the whole fabric of Christ's mediation, and in rolling a torrent of desolation through all the dominions of Jehovah.

3. The believer, in consequence of the mediation of Christ, gains a triumph over DEATH.

I am not here going to dispute the fact, that death is a relentless and terrible enemy: and if any one is so intrenched in the carelessness of a worldly mind, or the hardihood of philosophical unbelief, as to question this fact, I would bid him correct his error, by a visit to that bed-side, where the conflict with this enemy is actually going forward. Let him go, at that awful moment, when the distance between time and eternity is contracted to a point; when the objects of the two worlds meet and mingle in the twilight of life. Let him watch the fading expression of that sinking eye; and wipe the cold damps of death from that pale and fallen cheek; and listen to that awful groan, which is the signal of a departing spirit. Let him count the fluttering pulse, till he can count no longer; and then let him gaze upon that crazy, dissolving tabernacle, and think that the soul is gone! If he be not a monster, instead of a man, he is now cured of his insensibility to the terrors of death. Laugh at the approach of this king of terrors, if you will,—but let not human nature stand charged with the awful outrage: rather confess that you have put off the character of a man, and put on that of a fiend.

But notwithstanding death is, in itself, an event so terrible, so appalling to the courage of the stoutest heart, charge me not with inconsistency, if I say that the Christian may reasonably rise above its terrors. I do not mean that nature, even in the Christian, will not pay her tribute of dread to this formidable enemy; and doubtless there are cases, in which, for wise purposes, a full share of religious consolation is not granted, while in the immediate conflict. But I mean that every believer in Jesus has a just and legitimate ground for triumph. I mean, Christians, that He whom you adore as your Redeemer and your Head, has been down into the dark dominions of Death, and encountered the monster, and taken away his sting; and that in virtue of your union,

to Him, you have a share in the benefits of this glorious victory. Avoid passing through the dark valley, you cannot: it is the only passage from this world to heaven: But even there, where nothing but gloom thickens upon the sinner,—where no sounds but those of vengeance, strike upon his ear,—you may walk in the light of the Divine countenance, and be charmed by the music of attending angels. The grave may seem to you a cold and dark habitation; but as sure as Jesus has risen, the iron-bands which confine you there, will ere long break; and that mouldering body will come forth in purity and splendour, to constitute a part of your Redeemer's triumph.

4. I will only add, fourthly, that the triumph of the Christian, in virtue of the mediation of Christ, extends to ALL THE POWERS OF DARKNESS: Even with respect to hell itself, and all the enemies which it embosoms, he may ask in the language of triumph, *Who is he that condemneth?*

If there be any ground for a final triumph of those malignant spirits over the Christian, it must be, either because his admission to heaven would involve a reflection upon the justice of God, or because his character would be offensive to Infinite Holiness. But neither of these is the fact. The atonement of Christ which was made on his behalf, and in which he trusts, has satisfied every claim which justice could urge: the Spirit of Christ in his sanctifying operations, ultimately removes every vestige of pollution; and the intercession of Christ is ever prevalent for his perseverance in the way to heaven. If then, the powers of darkness ever gain possession of his soul, (with reverence be it spoken,) it must prove the redeeming blood and renewing grace of Christ to be inefficacious; and he must finally have an opposite destination from that for which all Heaven has been interested to prepare him. Here, Christian, is the crowning part of your victory. And remember, that your Redeemer's mediation not only shuts the door of hell,—but it opens the gate of heaven. You are not only delivered from the power of every enemy, but you are put in possession of a glorious inheritance. All things are yours. Justly, therefore, may you exclaim, under the pressure of affliction, in your conflict with yourself, amid the agonies of death, and when your immortal soul, escaping the vigilance of malignant spirits, passes the threshold of the world of glory,—justly may you exclaim,—*Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died;*

yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us.

On a review of this subject, we learn, first, what constitutes the distinctive character, and the *essential glory* of the Gospel.

All the false systems of religion which have existed in the world, whether they have been professedly opposed to the Bible, or professedly drawn from it—have entirely mistaken the exigencies of human nature, and of course, have utterly failed in their attempts to provide for them. They have laid “the flatteringunction” to human pride, by denying the existence of any deep moral disorder in the heart, and the necessity of any supernatural remedy. And when reason and conscience have, for a season, prevailed, and given the lie to this view of man’s character and condition, and waked up the gloomy apprehensions of nature in the sinner’s bosom; Oh, how has he listened in vain for some voice which should speak to him in accents of forgiveness! But no such deceitful dealing is chargeable upon the Gospel. In distinction from every other system of religion, it reveals to man the naked exigencies of his condition, and speaks plainly to him of the terrors of the wrath of God. And having dealt thus honestly, it proceeds to disclose to him the mediation of Jesus Christ; in virtue of which, it bids him rise up from the bed of spiritual death, and walk abroad in all the peace, and joy, and dignity of an heir of heaven. Here then, I repeat, is the distinctive feature of Christianity; and every system of religion in which this feature is not found—whatever else it may be—is not *Gospel*. It may assume the name, and claim the honor; but with that which constitutes its life and power, it has no communion.

And as the mediation of Christ constitutes the leading characteristic of the Gospel, so also it imparts to it its *chief glory*. Admit that Jesus Christ died as an atoning sacrifice, and rose as the first fruits of them that slept, and that he now lives in heaven as a prevailing Intercessor; in other words, admit the scriptural view of his mediation, and there is enough in the gospel to justify all the interest which it has excited, whether on earth or in heaven. I wonder not that the sinner, burdened with pollution, and harrowed with guilt, betakes himself to it as his last and only refuge. I am not surprised that he upon whom this world’s

misfortunes thicker, should press the gospel to his bosom, and find a stream of living consolation pouring in upon his desolate heart. I am at no loss to account for the fact, that the gospel exerts such a sustaining influence in the valley of death; that the falling of the earthly tabernacle is so often attended by a shout of victory over the king of terrors. And when I open the volume of inspiration, I am not surprised to find how much the gospel awakens the interest, and engages the scrutiny of angels; or in what strains of admiration and ecstasy, its praises are celebrated by all the inhabitants of heaven. But if you blot out this bright feature of Christianity, or if, while you call Christ, Mediator, you virtually disown him in that character, by denying the atoning efficacy of his death, I know not what there is left in the gospel, to meet the necessities of the wretched on earth, or to justify the acclamations of the redeemed in heaven. If I really believed that Jesus Christ was only a teacher, I should feel that it were but mockery to the miseries of a fellow mortal, if I were to direct him to the gospel for consolation; and though he were to sit down and weep his life away in an agony of despair, I should still be obliged, in justice to my own convictions, to tell him that here is no refuge for the guilty.

2. We learn from this subject, the *dignity of the Christian character*.

This is the grand distinction in comparison with which every other falls into insignificance. You may be rich in this world's goods; but wealth is perishable, and in one hour of unsuccessful enterprise, your property may all be given to the winds. You may be loaded with this world's honors; but human applause is capricious and uncertain; and what will become of the laurels of earthly greatness, when your head is laid in the dust? But the dignity of the Christian depends on none of these frivolous and artificial distinctions. It depends on nothing short of his union to the Son of God; a union which is formed by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and which secures to him an interest in the inexpressible glories of Christ's mediation. He belongs to that redeemed family, which is to act so distinguished a part on the theatre of heaven; and the ages of eternity will only contribute to brighten his renown, and to enhance for ever the glory of his exaltation.

But how different; how very different is the opinion, which is formed of the Christian, by the children of the world. By some, he is regard-

ed as a miserable enthusiast; by others, as buried in austerity and gloom. His noble birth, his distinguished friends, his high destination, are all overlooked or forgotten. But, take heed, ye who pride yourselves upon the distinctions of life, lest the day should come, when he will appear in triumph, and you in dishonor. In that cottage, where poverty and distress reside, and which you might think yourself dishonored to enter, there lives a candidate for all the honors of the New Jerusalem. There is the joy of contentment even now; and in the hour of death, there will be the triumph of faith; and after that, there will be an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. You may despise him, and shrink from his society, but angels will rejoice in it. Jesus the Mediator will own him as one of his ransomed people, and place upon his head a crown of life. But to what honor can you look forward, who build all your hopes upon the world? To the honor of a name which will perish, as soon as your body is hidden in the tomb: to the honor of a decorated coffin, a splendid funeral, a towering monument—it may be, a lying epitaph—which will tell the passing stranger of virtues which were never yours. And is this all? Teach us, Great God, the meanness of worldly glory, and help us to aspire to the exalted dignity of the Christian!

3. The subject teaches the Christian a lesson of *humility*.

Who art thou, disciple of Christ, that thou shouldest be an heir to such a glorious inheritance? What hast thou done to entitle thee to the high privileges of a child of God? Thou art a creature of yesterday—a worm of the dust; and till lately thou wert a child of wrath, and a rebel against Jehovah. And such thou wouldest always have been, had it not been for the power of redeeming grace. Yes, Christian, He who brought you up out of the horrible pit and misery clay, and set your feet upon a rock, and established your going, and hath put a new song in your mouth, and hath sustained and shielded you ever since by the arm of his power,—he is your covenant God and Redeemer. Wherefore, when you praise *Him*, forget not to abase *yourself*. When you have the brightest view of the riches of divine grace in your redemption; when faith mounts up nearest to the Redeemer's throne, and dwells with most intense delight upon his glories, and anticipates, with firmest assurance, a residence in his kingdom—then does it become you to bend with deepest humility in token of your unworthiness; and if you ever mingle your voice with the voices of the redeemed, you will

not more certainly ascribe *blessing, and honor, and thanksgiving to the Lamb that was slain*, than you will add, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, O Lord, be all the glory.*

Finally : The subject impressively teaches us the *guilt of unbelief.*

It is unbelief which rejects the gospel ; and the guilt of it is proportioned to the excellence and glory of the gospel. But the gospel is supremely excellent and glorious : it is the brightest revelation of the character and purposes of God, which, so far as we know, has ever been made to the universe. Unbelief, therefore, must involve aggravated guilt, and lead to a fearful condemnation. But you say, perhaps, that you are not an unbeliever, as you neither deny the divinity of revelation, or have aught to say against its doctrines. Fellow mortal, be not deceived. Believe me, there is a *practical* unbelief, which as really pours contempt upon the mediation of Christ, as the most boldly avowed infidelity. If it has more of the external appearance of religion, it is more at war with consistency ; for while it *acknowledges* the truth and importance of the gospel, it *acts* as though this gospel were neither true nor important. And I will tell you the marks of this unbelief, that you may know how to detect its operations ; for it is insidious and deceitful ; and has no doubt conducted multitudes to perdition, who had never doubted that they were on the way to glory. If, then, you do not love the commandments of God, and cordially approve of his character ; if you shrink from that self-denial which the gospel requires, and give yourself up to the control of sinful passions ; or if you are satisfied with a decent exterior, and feel no concern for the inner man of the heart ; or if you are sunk down into a state of stupidity, and worldly-mindedness, and forgetfulness of God, and neglect of prayer—then you have the most alarming symptoms of an evil heart of unbelief. Let no one think that the omniscient eye will not penetrate the thin disguise of merely a correct creed, or a credible profession. That eye will search to the very bottom of the heart ; and will dart lightning into every soul that puts on the exterior of a Christian, and yet does not cordially embrace the Saviour. Beware, then, of the spirit of unbelief. However little it may be regarded by the world, or however deep it may lie buried in the heart, it contains the elements of a tremendous curse ; for He whose decisions are irreversible, hath declared, *He that believeth not shall be damned.*